

REMARKS

Please reconsider the rejections of the claims in light of the foregoing amendments and the following arguments and allow the pending claims.

A. Rejection of claims 18-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Williamson, et al.

The Examiner rejected claims 18-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,523,995 to Williamson, *et al* ('Williamson'). Per the Examiner, the filter of Williamson describes the essential limitations of the claimed invention including, for example, "a two-step filter process, in which a first stage filter removes bacteria via a porous charged web filter followed by a second stage filter which may be among other things, activated carbon."

To anticipate, every element and limitation of the claimed invention must be found in a single prior art reference, arranged as in the claim. Karsten Mfg. Corp. v. Cleveland Golf Co., 242 F.3d 1376, 1383, 58 USPQ2d 1286, 1291 (Fed. Cir. 2001); Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech, Inc., 927 F.2d 1565, 1576, 18 USPQ2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Williamson's disclosure of a filter having a first stage that removes microorganisms and a second stage that includes activated carbon actually discloses a three-stage filter. For example, Williamson only mentions a filter having a first stage that removes microorganisms and a second stage that includes activated carbon, where it is also disclosed that the filter configuration includes a third stage that removes impurities by electrokinetic adsorption. See Williamson, col. 10, lines 51-61.

Williamson does teach explicitly a two-stage filter, but the two-stage filters have a reversed arrangement as compared to applicant's invention. Williamson does not disclose a two-stage filtering process consisting essentially of a first stage that removes microorganisms and a second stage that includes activated carbon. On the other hand, applicants have taught that such an arrangement is particularly beneficial for preventing the growth of microorganisms in activated carbon. See application, page 5, lines 1-15.

Applicants have now amended claim 18 to make it explicit that claim 18 encompasses a two-stage filtering process consisting essentially of a first stage that removes microorganisms and a second stage that is activated carbon. Support for this amendment can be found in the present application on page 6, lines 26-30. Applicants contend that through the use of the 'closed-ended' preamble of consisting essentially of, the two-stage filtering process of claim 18 is novel in light of Williamson's three-stage filter and Williamson's reversed two-stage filters.

Applicants have also amended claim 24 by rewriting the claim into independent format to clarify that Applicants claim a three-stage filtering process that removes microorganisms in a first stage, removes sediments and some organics prior in flow to said second filtering step and a second stage that includes activated carbon. Support for this amendment can be found in the present application on page 7, lines 7-21. Because Williamson does not disclose a three-stage filtering process that removes microorganisms in a first stage, removes sediments and some organics in a third stage that is prior in flow to the second filtering stage and a second stage that includes activated carbon, such as set forth in the present application, Williamson cannot anticipate the amended claims.

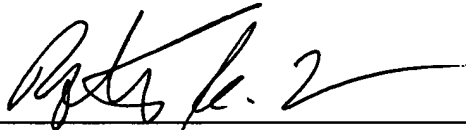
Therefore, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection of claims 18-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Williamson.

In sum, in view of the foregoing arguments, we respectfully submit that the rejected claims are patentably distinct over the references cited by the Examiner and meet all other statutory requirements. We believe that the present Application is now in complete condition for allowance and, therefore, respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the rejections in the Office Action and allow this Application.

We invite the Examiner to telephone the undersigned should any issues remain after the consideration of this response.

Respectfully requested,

NELSON MULLINS RILEY & SCARBOROUGH



Robert S. Thomas
Registration No. 52,284

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Date

Keenan Building, Third Floor
1330 Lady Street
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (864) 250-2298
Fax: (803) 256-7500